

Israeli troops wound 3 in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli troops shot and wounded three Palestinians in Gaza City Saturday while dispersing a demonstration by radicals opposed to Arab-Israeli peace talks, Palestinian sources said. Israel Radio said earlier border police had opened fire on a car trying to run a roadblock on the Gaza road in Tel Aviv late on Friday, wounding an Arab man. Two other Arab men in the car were injured when it crashed. The radio said two of the men were from the Gaza Strip and did not have permits to be inside Israel. The third was from the Arab village of Baka Al Gharbiya. It did not say which of them had been shot. The radio said the three had earlier fled in their car when a patrol of civilian police volunteers stopped them in north Tel Aviv to check identity papers.

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Moscow voices concern about Golan settlement

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union has expressed concern about new Israeli settlements on the Golan Heights and said they contradicted Israel's expressed desire for confidence-building steps with its Arab neighbors. TASS news agency, quoting a Foreign Ministry spokesman, said Moscow believed that that steps which made resolving the Middle East conflict more difficult should not be allowed. "The continuation of settlement activity on the occupied Arab territories, which naturally include the Golan Heights, contradicts the Israeli leadership's frequently expressed interest in confidence-building measures from both sides," it said. Israel Monday inaugurated a Jewish settlement on the Golan Heights. The Foreign Ministry remarks, couched in mild terms, said Moscow hoped Israel would take note of its concern and take steps to defuse the problem.

Kuwait plans defence pact with Britain

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's defence minister was quoted Saturday as saying the emirate would sign a defence pact with Britain before the end of November. The minister, Sheikh Ali Sabah Al Salem, told Sawt Al Kuwait newspaper that his country would also buy "advanced weapons" from Britain "in the near future." The pact, he said, would give Kuwait priority in purchasing weapons and training for the Kuwait army. It would also provide "logistic services to the British forces in Kuwait should the need arise." Sheikh Ali said a similar agreement would be reached with France.

Iranian, Qatari leaders meet

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati met in Tehran Saturday with Qatar's Crown Prince Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, Tehran Radio reported. The broadcast said the two discussed bilateral issues and "agreements reached between the two countries. Broader cooperation in international issues, and between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) were among the issues discussed at the meeting."

Iranian paper says no ties with Egypt

NICOSIA (AP) — A hardline Iranian newspaper Saturday denounced a leading parliamentarian's calls for resumption of ties with Egypt, saying it would be a blow to Tehran's revolutionary prestige, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. The agency quoted the daily Jomhuri Islami as saying that the present interest sections each country maintains in the other's capital are sufficient. "Promotion of ties with Cairo would not be interpreted in the Arab World or by Muslim public opinion as a mere expansion of relations," the Farsi-language paper said.

Indian foreign minister in Tehran

NICOSIA (AP) — Indian Foreign Minister Madhavsinh Solanki arrived in Tehran Saturday, Tehran Radio reported. The broadcast said Mr. Solanki was welcomed by his Iranian counterpart, Ali Akbar Velayati. Mr. Solanki said that he will study political, economic and cultural issues with Iranian officials. Mr. Velayati said that Mr. Solanki's visit was of "special significance." Over the past year, Iranian leaders have issued occasional outbursts at the Indian government's throttling of a secessionist movement in Kashmir in northern India. But ties between the two countries remain good.

French actor, singer Yves Montand dies

PARIS (R) — French actor and singer Yves Montand, who delighted audiences around the world with hundreds of songs and some 40 films, died Saturday in a Paris suburb at the age of 70. French radio said Mr. Montand is best known to audiences for the film "Let's Make Love" and "72".

Masri says Washington best venue for multilaterals

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Taher Masri said Saturday that Washington could be the best venue for holding Arab-Israeli talks on regional issues and that such talks could start soon. The multilateral talks, which will focus on issues such as water, disarmament and the environment, are to involve the United States, the Soviet Union and the European Community (EC) countries as well as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab Maghreb Union in addition to the five Arab countries directly involved in the Middle East conflict. Canada, Japan and probably Britain and France will also attend, the prime minister said. The conference could be considered semi-international as earlier demanded by the Arab parties, Mr. Masri said. "We hope such conference will serve as a tool in the hands of the Arab parties to counter the bi-

lateral talks with Israel," he said in an interview with Agence France Presse (AFP). In reply to a question about Jordan's position, if Syria or the Palestinians decide to withdraw from the bilateral talks which began at last week's peace conference in Madrid, Mr. Masri said that he saw no signs that Syria would withdraw. The arrangements made by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker for the involvement of Arab parties in the conference are those that had been carried out in Madrid although there were differences over a number of details, Mr. Masri noted. "In my view," he said, "there are no differences on basic issues between Israel and Syria on the one hand and between the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and Israel," on the other. He said there were no signs that Syria would boycott the talks. "Until now we have not delved into matters of substance

which could bring about differences or end in deadlock that might justify withdrawal or retreat," he said. Mr. Masri denied that there were differences between the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and Syria, "though, there were different views on the place of bilateral talks and these were soon smoothed over." On prospects of resuming the dialogue between the U.S. and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), he said that he did not believe this would happen soon since the United States has shown no interest in such dialogue and this is not possible now since Israel is always trying to find an excuse to boycott the conference. But the prime minister said Jordan would like to see the dialogue resumed as soon as possible. The prime minister said that Jordan's priority was to see Israel recognising the Palestinians and returning the land to its owners



Taher Masri

and any talk about Palestinian-Jordanian confederation can wait. In principle Jordan is in agreement to the confederation idea but such step can only be tackled as the negotiations progress and in full understanding with the Palestinian side, Mr. Masri said. Discussion of this topic is premature now and we want to concentrate on the original issue at a time when Israel still refuses to

(Continued on page 5)

Palestinian team leaves for W. Bank, demands diplomatic treatment

By Nur Sati

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — The Palestinian negotiators and advisors who attended last week's Middle East peace conference in Madrid in a joint delegation with Jordan left for the West Bank Sunday after holding three days of talks in the Kingdom. The team arrived in Amman Wednesday from Madrid along with the Jordanian negotiators and advisors. During their stay in Jordan, the Palestinian delegation held talks with His Majesty King Hussein and a number of Jordanian officials. In a press conference Saturday, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, member of the Palestinian "guidance committee," told reporters: "We have asked for assurance from the co-sponsors of the peace conference that the Palestinian delegates be treated as a whole team with diplomatic status" upon entering the occupied territories and that there would be no attempt to harass the delegation. "We will not accept any interference and we will not make any contacts with the Israeli authorities," Dr. Ashrawi said. There would be representatives of the co-sponsors at the bridge,

she said. "I hope this will bring Israel to deal with us equitably, and if Israel violates our freedoms, we will protest." The Palestinian delegation is also hoping to be met by "our own people," she said. Dr. Ashrawi said that the delegation had done its best in Madrid to do well with what was entrusted to them, especially "the rights of Palestinians and the Palestinian identity." "The delegation spoke with strength, belief and trust of people," she said. The time and venue for the next round of bilateral talks will be announced by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker on Nov. 17, Dr. Ashrawi said. So far there is a deadlock on the venue of the talks. Palestinians insist the talks should be in Madrid. Israel insists the bilateral should be held in the Middle East. "Washington (as a venue) has not been decided yet," Dr. Ashrawi said. "We do not consider Washington a neutral place because of the strong Israeli lobby there and because the United States Congress is always supportive of the Israelis." She noted that the U.S. had not resumed its suspended dia-

logue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), although the Soviet Union has renewed its official relations with Israel. "If the U.S. wants the conference to be held in Washington, then they should partially renew relations with the PLO or at least acknowledge the PLO," Dr. Ashrawi said. The U.S. dialogue with the PLO was officially opened in January 1990 after the PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist and renunciation of terrorism. But it was suspended 18 months later when PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat refused to denounce a raid on Tel Aviv by the Palestine Liberation Front. Speaking of the letters of assurances from the United States to the Palestinians, Dr. Ashrawi said: "There is a clear American intention which aims at ending occupation, especially that of Jerusalem." On the question of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation she said: "The Palestinian understanding of a confederation is one among independent countries that would enter a confederacy with its own will." The Palestine National Council (PNC) has endorsed such a confederation between Jordan and



Hanan Ashrawi

Palestine, she noted. But Dr. Ashrawi pointed out that the delegation was not going according to all the terms of the letter of assurances "because it is not our agenda. The letter of assurance does not bind us to do anything against our will." She said, "It expresses the formal political American stand and it binds the U.S. with it and not the Palestinian side." "We went to the peace conference saying that international legality binds us to resolutions 242 and 338. We are seeking to influence the formal American stand," Dr. Ashrawi said. "When we accepted invitations to the conference, we made it clear that

(Continued on page 5)

Musa: Regional talks could start without Syria

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt said talks between Israel and its Arab neighbours on regional issues such as water and arms control would be delayed but might start without Syria. "We cannot stick to the original timetable" because the Syrians have shown they are not willing to take part before progress is made in bilateral talks with Israel," Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said in remarks published on Saturday. "Maybe (the regional talks) will start without Syrian presence in

their first stage," Mr. Musa added in an interview with the magazine October. Mr. Musa said it was important the bilateral talks — the second stage of U.S.-Soviet sponsored peace talks which began in Madrid last month — go ahead soon despite apparent deadlock over where they should take place. "We are anxious that bilateral talks should begin next week... some of them in America, some of them perhaps in European cities," Mr. Musa said. "But we agree with Syria that they should

not be held in the Middle East at least in the present stage." Mr. Musa did not say whether Egypt will attend the multilateral talks if the Syrians stay away. Nor did he express an opinion on Syrian position. Mr. Musa endorsed Syria's demand that bilateral talks, which began in Madrid, resume in Europe or the United States, the likely venue. Israel wants them to alternate between Israeli and Arab sites. Syria and Egypt coordinated closely during the Madrid confer-

ence. Their foreign ministers are likely to meet privately Sunday and Monday at a conference on security in the Gulf after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad also are expected to meet soon to discuss the peace process, the weekly Al-Ahram Al-Yom reported Saturday. Syria demands progress in the bilateral talks, including a clear Israeli position on return of the occupied Golan Heights, before it will join in multilaterals.

PLO, Syria reconciled; Fateh to reopen offices

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) foreign affairs chief Ferook Kaddoumi said Saturday the PLO was resuming full normal ties with Syria following years of animosity. Mr. Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department, told reporters the two sides were now working to strengthen their relations. Mr. Kaddoumi told reporters while leaving his hotel for talks with Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam: "We said from the start that the aim of these visits was to restore ties to normal. This had been achieved." Mr. Kaddoumi also said the PLO and Syria had agreed the third stage of the Middle East peace process should not start until bilateral talks bring tangible results. Speaking to reporters after talks with Foreign Minister Ferook Al Sharaa, Mr. Kaddoumi said they discussed their common stand at the peace talks. "We discussed the national conception of the Arab-Israeli conflict... details of joint Palestinian-Syrian future steps

and the adoption of common understanding on every issue at the conference and outside..." he said. In the bilateral talks, the main Arab delegations face Israel separately on the central questions — peace and borders. The third stage consists of multilateral talks on broader secondary issues such as arms control and water rights. On the timing of the multilateral talks Mr. Kaddoumi said: "The Palestinian-Syrian agreement is that when a tangible achievement is made in the bilateral talks we go to the multilaterals..." "Before achieving that we cannot go, because the main issue is the Palestinian cause and there should be progress on this issue before anything else." The PLO was not represented at the conference but it had a backseat role in advising Palestinians from the occupied territories who took part alongside Jordanian delegates. Mr. Kaddoumi's visit came 40 hours after Mr. Arafat and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad held talks in the Syrian port of Latakia. Syria said Saturday that the

Arab negotiators achieved "big positive gains" in Madrid and repulsed several Israeli attempts to provoke them. Muwafak Al Allaf, who led the Syrian side to last Sunday's separate Syrian-Israeli talks, said sitting at the negotiating table proved to the world that Arabs "were not unwilling to talk to their enemy for the sake of achieving a just and comprehensive peace." Speaking on Syrian television, Mr. Allaf said President Assad directed the delegation to put up "with anything which does not affect our rights and with any attempt to provoke us into walking out of the conference." Mr. Allaf described Foreign Minister Sharaa's waving of an old poster showing Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir as a "terrorist" wanted by Britain as a "magnificent move." "That summed up the nature of the Israeli regime. That is what was left fixed in the minds of the world," he said. Mr. Allaf, a former Syrian ambassador to the United Nations and currently a U.N. ex-

(Continued on page 5)

Arafat, Mubarak discuss next moves

CAIRO (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Saturday as part of intensive preparations for a second round of peace talks between the Arabs and Israel. The PLO is officially excluded from the peace process launched at a ground-breaking conference in Madrid at the end of last month. But it guided Palestinian negotiators from behind the scenes and in the six days since the conference, Mr. Arafat has toured Jordan, Syria and Yemen to plan strategy for the second round. "The PLO want to show they're still in control, that's very important at this stage," a senior Arab diplomat said. Mr. Arafat was in Amman at the same time as members of the Palestinian delegation returning from Madrid but it is not known whether he met them. The Israelis have threatened to walk out of the talks if the PLO is officially involved. There was no immediate word on the substance on Mr. Arafat's talks with Mr. Mubarak. Relations between Egypt and the PLO were badly strained by Mr. Arafat's support for Iraq in the Gulf war but the two sides have been working together closely since the run-up to the Madrid conference. Mr. Arafat's visit to Syria on Thursday appeared to have produced a dramatic improvement in relations with Damascus, tense since the Syrians supported a rebellion against Mr. Arafat in 1983. But Mr. Arafat still has to worry about Palestinian hardliners who are dubious about the

entire peace process. The leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Nayef Hawatmeh, called Saturday for Palestinians to withdraw from the peace talks until Israel halted Jewish settlement in the occupied territories and Palestinians were allowed more representative delegates. Palestinians have been pressing for an Arab summit before the second stage of talks but there is no sign of one. Egypt, which has offered to mediate between Arab delegations and Israel in the bilateral talks, is believed reluctant to attend such a summit for fear of jeopardising its neutrality. Earlier Saturday, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Mr. Arafat discussed means of unifying Arab ranks to help bolster the peace process, Yemeni media reported. The PLO leader flew to Sanaa on Friday after talks in Syria and Jordan. The Yemeni media said that Mr. Arafat briefed Mr. Saleh on the outcome of the opening phase of the Madrid peace conference. "The meeting dealt with the matters that concern the Arab Nation and means of unifying Arab ranks and bolstering them for the peace conference negotiations to ensure a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region and the restoration of Arab rights," according to the Yemen News Agency. The Yemeni president stressed his country welcomed all such efforts and hoped that the Madrid outcome will ensure Arab rights led by the Palestinian people's right to an independent state on Palestinian soil, with Jerusalem as its capital, the agency added.

Turkey to allow Chechen hijackers, plane to return home

ANKARA (R) — Turkey will allow hijackers to fly a Soviet plane and its passengers to Grozny, capital of the breakaway south Russian region of Chechno-Ingushetia, Ankara Governor Erdogan Sahinoglu said Saturday. He said the hijackers' action was more in the nature of a protest against the Russian Federation than an act of terrorism and indicated that the predominantly Chechen passengers did not object to the diversion of the plane. "Preparations are under way to meet the needs of the plane and the people on board after which it will head for the Chechen capital of Grozny," Mr. Sahinoglu told reporters at Ankara's Esenboga airport. At least 164 passengers were reported to be aboard the Tupolev-154 which was surrounded by police when it landed at Ankara airport Saturday afternoon. The hijackers were three Chechen dissidents protesting Russia's attempt to reimpose control on the breakaway Muslim region of Chechno-Ingushetia, a Turkish official at Ankara's Esenboga airport told the semi-official Anatolian news agency. The hijacking took place as an armed standoff between Russian

(Continued on page 5)

Water — the rare commodity could make or break Mideast peace

By Ghadeer Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — When Israel and the Arab states sit down for negotiations on much-needed multilateral water-sharing agreements in the third stage of Middle East peace talks, they will lack well tested legal principles governing the issue. But, according to experts, water may in the final analysis determine the future of conflict or peace. Now, as for many years, water experts have warned that the threat of a water crisis in the Jordan River basin has been steadily increasing and could lead to outbreak of warfare between the riparians as well as domestic strife as competition rises among users within each country. "Relative to the number of

people in Jordan, Israel and the occupied territories there is not enough water," said Dr. Elias Salameh, head of the Water Research Department at the University of Jordan. "It is a zero-sum game. Any gain for the Arabs is a loss for Israel, and vice versa." The Jordan River, which originates in the highlands of Lebanon and Syria, is shared by Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel, and all these states are experiencing water shortages. In his assessment of the prospects for peace in the region, University of Pennsylvania Professor Thomas Naff said that while it may be possible to eventually overcome Israel's security arguments for retention of the occupied territories, "the hydrological arguments will persist unless the water issue is settled. It is water, in

the final analysis, that will determine the future of the occupied territories — and by extension, the issue of conflict or peace." "The reality, historic and contemporary, is that the Jordan basin's actors do not resort to law to settle water disputes; these issues are determined by the relative power relationships in the basin at any given time," Prof. Naff, who had addressed a water conference in Amman last month, told the Jordan Times in an interview. Israel, which, according to Prof. Naff, consumes 87 per cent of the territories' water on both sides of the green line, is using water as a reason for never withdrawing from the occupied territories. Israel's agriculture ministry paid for full-page newspaper

advertisement earlier this year in which it argued that ending the occupation would leave Israel powerless to prevent Palestinian "mismanagement, lack of knowledge or plain neglect" of the shared mountain aquifer and "endanger its very existence." Israel's consumption of most of the West Bank water makes it almost impossible to consider the return of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to the West Bank in a political settlement unless Tel Aviv relinquishes its hold on the territories' vital resources. Israel now restricts Palestinian water consumption in the territories to 20 per cent of the shared mountain aquifer in the West Bank. Thus, the Palestinian water supply has barely increased since Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967.

Even the briefest glimpse at the region's geography and demography shows why the issue is so fickle; populations are growing far more rapidly than aquifers can be replenished; rivers cross borders between enemy states making sharing unlikely; and rainfall, in many areas, is scarce and capricious. But when the Arab and Israeli negotiations attempt to find equitable solutions to water issues, the basic problem will be applying international riparian law, which remains rudimentary, at the talks. Furthermore, a political agreement is also needed to clear the way for financing several water projects that have been bogged down over political difference between the countries affected by these projects. Jordan's Al Wihda Dam near the Jordan-Syria

border, which the Kingdom hoped to provide about 200 million cubic metres per year (mcm/yr), was frozen after Israel intervened with the World Bank to bloc financing two years ago. "When you talk about the legal basis of the arguments that the negotiators are going to bring to the table, you are talking about a set of legal principles that are articulated but are not well tested in most cases," Prof. Naff said. "Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians and Lebanese will legitimately invoke a variety of legal principles to establish their claims and that is where the problem lies." He said the existing law, although not an effective mechanism for settling the issue, can be an "effective instrument for maintaining an

agreement after a political agreement is reached." "So when these parties at the peace conference begin to try to establish their legal positions, there are certain legal principles that everyone uses. The problem is that everyone uses the same principles but interprets them differently and uses them selectively in order to strengthen their case..." Prof. Naff said. So at this stage, without peace between Israel and the Arab countries, power is determining the use of water resources. "There may be no wars between the riparians simply because Israel has overwhelming power and the military option is not viable. But the situation may become so critical that one party, Jordan,

(Continued on page 5)

SSC working on comprehensive health plan for Jordanians

AMMAN (J.T.) — If plans being worked out by the Social Security Corporation (SSC), approved all citizens employed in various private and public institutions in Jordan will enjoy health insurance services in the coming year.

The news was announced by SSC Director General Mohammad Al Saqqaf following a meeting of the SSC advisory committee, which has been studying the application of a national health scheme benefiting all institutions.

The committee has approved a general framework of a draft project prepared by the University of Jordan's Studies Centre and worked out with the help of an international expert invited by the SSC, according to Mr. Saqqaf.

The SSC has embarked on preliminary measures designed to carry out this vital project back in 1991, which is consi-

dered as one of the numerous tasks of the SSC, he said. The advisory committee, he said, groups representatives of various health organisations, trade unions and other institutions who helped prepare the basic elements of the plan, Mr. Saqqaf added.

The 12-year old SSC now provides services to 613,000 beneficiaries whose savings with the SSC now stand at JD 416 million, most of which is invested in major income-generating projects and development schemes designed to earn more income.

In an earlier statement to the Jordan Times, Mr. Saqqaf said that the SSC has invested in banks, hotels and resthouses, development bonds, real estate, and it also gave housing loans and continues to seek sound investments in profitable projects. More than one third of the JD 416 million are currently invested in banks as



Mohammad Al Saqqaf shares or deposits, Mr. Saqqaf said.

The SSC is currently building two major hospitals in Amman and Irbid and a spa at the Dead Sea. The two hospitals will each cost about JD 15 million and the Spa JD 12 million, Mr. Saqqaf said.

SSC officials said that be-

tween 1 per cent and 2 per cent will be cut from each employee's salary to cover the cost of the health scheme. The plan will be comprehensive and will include hospitalisation, medical examination and medicines. Each beneficiary will have the right to choose any hospital for treatment, he said.

According to Mr. Saqqaf, the advisory committee ruled that there must be a special fund for these salary cuts to finance the operations and the account must be separate from the existing funds that pay for old age pension, treatment for occupational injuries, deaths and others.

Mr. Saqqaf said that the advisory committee's meeting which approved the plan's version was attended by Health Minister Mamdouh Al Abbadi, Jordan Medical Association President Ishaq Maraqa and senior SSC officials.

Masri pledges government's support in monitoring corruption and mismanagement

AMMAN (Petra) — The government is determined to fight corruption in government departments and public and private organisations and is in the process of creating a special unit to carry out administrative inspection to help control civil service work, Prime Minister Taher Masri announced Saturday.

Among the numerous issues facing Jordan at present is collection of state funds and it is the duty of the Audit Bureau to see to it that such funds are collected, prime minister said during a visit to the Audit Bureau.

Mr. Masri spoke after hearing from Audit Bureau Chief Adel Al Qudah that more than JD456 million are still due on government departments and municipal and village councils that have not been collected from the public over the past several years.

Mr. Masri, who met the Bureau Staff to learn about their various responsibilities, emphasised the importance of the bureau's activities and tasks. We said that the government was ready to provide the bureau with all facilities to help it develop and modernise its methods and enlist local and foreign expertise in order to protect public funds and prevent rampant corruption and negligence of public service.



Prime Minister Taher Masri and Audit Bureau Chief Adel Al Qudah Saturday address workers at the Audit Bureau. The prime minister pledged to fight corruption in government (Petra photo).

private sector institutions and said a great deal of funds have been wasted due to mismanagement. Therefore, we said, there is a need to create some kind of control over these private institutions.

Mr. Masri urged the Audit Bureau to upgrade the efficiency of its staff through scholarships, training courses and seminars.

According to Mr. Qudah, the Audit Bureau faces numerous difficulties and is seeking to conduct internal administrative changes to help it cope with its tasks.

The Audit Bureau hopes that the government would reexamine its laws and regulations with a view to introducing amendments that would help it cope with new developments and additional tasks, Mr. Qudah said.

The Audit Bureau, which has been in existence for 40 years, has not had sufficient time to maintain full control over the financial operations of all government agencies and public organisations, Mr. Qudah said.

Mr. Masri also referred to the

"Our aim will not be just to point out the violators of the law, but rather to improve performance in government offices," Mr. Qudah said.

He added that the bureau, backed by the full authority of the government, would never be lenient in its mission of collecting public funds and saving state funds.

According to the bureau's 1990 report, numerous government departments have committed violations of regulations concerning public spending. The bureau, he said, has issued many queries to these departments but has received favourable responses from only 33 per cent of them. He said some of these departments have not yet clarified queries about their financial activities for the past six years.

"We consider our task as complementary to those of government departments and we seek to put things right and prevent repeated violations of financial regulations," he said. "We seek to collect public funds and prevent

manipulation or negligence."

According to 1990 report, a total of JD447,617,250 are still due to government departments that have not been collected from the public. He said that municipalities have still to collect JD5,306,333 and the Amman Municipality will have to collect JD3,221,250.

In order to help collect the sums which are overdue to the government, Mr. Qudah said, new methods and techniques should be adopted, fines must be imposed and strict measures must be introduced so that state funds can be duly collected from the public. Mr. Qudah noted that the 1990 report shows a JD2,135,629 in savings made available through auditing various financial activities.

The Audit Bureau, which came into being in 1952, is authorised to control accounts of various government ministries and public organisations as well as municipal and village councils and to monitor their spending and collecting of dues.

Computer expo attracted 20,000 visitors

AMMAN (J.T.) — Twenty thousand people visited last week's computer systems exhibition at the Amman International Expo Center near the University of Jordan, exhibition organisers said.

According to Jordan Computer Society President Faez Qudsi, 28 computer companies exhibited equipment worth JD 1 million during the exhibition, which lasted four days and ended Tuesday.

Exhibition visitors, through a questionnaire, voted Ideal Systems Company (Apple) as the best exhibitors, followed by Jordan Computer Centre (Sams) and Mando for Computer Systems and Teaching Aids.

According to Mr. Qudsi, the show cost the 28 exhibitors, JD 100,000. He said that during the exhibition, 40 lectures on various computer aspects were delivered.

The society last Tuesday held a reception party to mark the end of the exhibition. The exhibition was opened last Saturday by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Ali Abul Ragheb.

Information minister meets archbishop

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif Saturday received Sydney Archbishop Donald Robinson. The two discussed the humanitarian role the archbishop's office is carrying out as part of its activities in the Middle East Council of Churches, especially in assisting refugees in the Middle East region. The meeting was attended by the Australian ambassador to Jordan.

Specialised teams begin studying Jordan's civil service system

AMMAN (J.T.) — As part of an overall plan to overhaul the Jordanian civil service system, specialised teams from the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) Saturday embarked on visits to government departments and ministries in preparation for measures designed to upgrade senior civil servant posts and improve performance.

The teams will be directing their attention first to the employees of the senior posts, classified as first category employees, a process which will continue until the end of next month before they will turn their attention to the other categories, according to a CSC spokesman.

Information to be collected by the teams is required to prepare job descriptions and responsibilities for each civil servant to help decision-makers draw up pro-

grammes and plans for future work and expansion, the CSC spokesman said.

The CSC is a government controlled agency which receives and processes applications for work in government offices. The IPA is an institute where government employees are given training to raise the standard of their efficiency.

IPA Director General Abdullah Ulayyan told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the IPA and CSC are currently preparing the job descriptions of nearly 200 posts classified in the first category. The teams' work is part of Jordan's drive to improve its civil service system to meet the requirements of social and economic development, the CSC official said.

In October 1989, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed an agreement

with Jordan to provide the country with technical assistance worth \$750,000 in the form of experts and equipment to help it carry out training courses and to provide experts to help the Kingdom in overhauling its civil service system.

A statement had said that the plan envisages simplifying procedures at government departments and reducing to a minimum the level of routine work required as well as preparing training programmes for civil servants.

According to that statement, the government would provide \$430,000 worth of in-kind assistance and facilities in the course of implementing the plan, which will be carried out by the CSC and the IPA.

Mr. Ulayyan told Petra that the programme will be implemented in three years.

Birthday card designing competition organised to raise funds for village

By Maha Adhadi
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — To celebrate His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, the Marriott Hotel, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, has set up a competition for all children under the age of 12 to design a birthday card for the occasion.

With each card submitted, a minimum amount of 300 fils will be paid as an entry fee and all proceeds will go to the SOS Children's Villages Association in Jordan, which accommodates orphaned children.

"The role of the Ministry of Education was to inform all children of this event," said Lina Mousher, sales manager at the Marriott Hotel and an organiser of the event. "We wanted to make sure that all children under 12, from private and public schools, will participate in celebrating the birthday of the big father. And so that we do not restrain the children's imagination, we did not put a limit on the card size."

According to Ms. Mousher,

three prize-winning cards will be selected and all the cards entered in this competition will be put on display in the lobby of the Marriott Hotel by Nov. 13, making Nov. 12 the last day for submitting cards. In an effort to surprise the children, competition organisers are keeping the prizes secret.

"The schools are divided into directories, with each directory having a set date for the collection of cards from the headmasters of schools in the area between Nov. 10 and Nov. 12," Ms. Mousher said. "But it is also possible to submit cards directly to the Marriott Hotel by Nov. 12."

The big celebration, however, will be on Nov. 14 when the entire parking lot of the Marriott Hotel will be turned into a children's fun fair and to which the children from the SOS villages will be invited.

"There will be three fun-makers or entertainers who will set up educational games for minimal fees in which children could participate in between 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.,

with the Armed Forces Band playing happy tunes that appeal to children. At noon the card winners will be announced," Ms. Mousher said.

According to Lina Kopy, director at the SOS Children's Villages Association, donations are especially needed at the time when a second SOS village is being prepared to be officially opened.

"The new SOS Children's Village in Aqaba started operating in Aug. 1991 and already accommodates nine children, but its official opening will take place under the patronage of Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor in the Spring of 1992," Ms. Kopy said, adding that the village in Aqaba is an extension of the SOS Village in Amman.

"The Aqaba village is a special development project for the south of Jordan and will give services to orphaned children in the southern area. The village has a potential capacity of 72 children," Ms. Kopy said.

Officials report sharp increase in children with lice and scabies

AMMAN (Petra) — The number of children with lice-infested hair and scabies is increasing among school children and the level of infections has now exceeded the dangerous red line in some areas, according to a senior official at the Ministry of Education.

Although the country lacks proper surveys and statistics about scabies and lice, any visitor to a school congested with children can easily spot children infested by scabies or lice in their hair, said Zuhair Zakaria, director of the ministry's School Affairs Department.

Mr. Zakaria attributed the widespread phenomenon to the scarcity of clean water in Jordan, neglect of personal hygiene and also the increase in the number of foreign migrants.

Mr. Zakaria said that scabies is an ancient phenomenon which is linked to lack of proper hygiene and the person's immediate surroundings. One third of the Kingdom's population are students of some kind and nearly 83 per cent of them study at congested schools, especially in the wake of the Gulf crisis and the Gulf war which brought about a sharp increase in the number of students in each class. Also, the students are exposed to the spread of the flu virus in addition to lice and scabies due to their close contact at school, he added.

He said children using personal materials and clothes of others

and coming into close contacts with other members of the family or guests at home, relatives, friends at school or at home in addition to the shortage of clean water in the summer have all contributed to this dangerous phenomenon.

Of late and in the wake of the Gulf war, schools started witnessing an increasing number of students with scabies and lice in their hair. And although the number does not exceed 4 per cent in the worst situations, urgent measures need to be taken before the phenomenon can reach dangerous proportions, Mr. Zakaria said.

He said that expatriates returning to Jordan had spent some time under very traumatic conditions in Kuwait and in the Gulf, during the war and in the aftermath, a situation which breeds diseases.

The Health Ministry said lice normally invade the hair on the head, especially as the victim neglects washing with soap and water. Normally, such phenomenon is observed among children who neglect hygiene and old and neglected persons who also infect others through close contact and the use of each others' clothes, a Health Ministry official said.

In some cases, the official said, the scalp is infected and inflammation results, requiring immediate treatment. The Health Ministry has a special unit for school health affairs and teams of

doctors regularly conduct examinations on children to ensure they enjoy good health, said the official. These teams extend their work through the various towns and villages.

He said that 16 teams are appointed to conduct dentistry inspection and 16 teams conduct medical examinations at schools in various towns and villages on a regular basis.

He said that children of the first four elementary schools are subject to full medical examinations and instructions on personal hygiene are always provided to the children. Furthermore, the official said, school canteens are strictly monitored by ministry officials.

The ministry official said that students are urged to take care of personal cleanliness and wash with water and soap frequently to prevent any infection.

French team completes inspection of tomb

AMMAN (J.T.) — A French technical team from the National Electricity Company has completed a two week inspection of the King's tomb at the ancient Nabatean city of Petra.

The team has been studying the corrosion of rocks in and around the ancient site caused by weather conditions.

According to the French embassy here, the team, which completed the study Sunday, will now carry out laboratory tests in France in a bid to determine the best means for protecting the ancient place and providing maintenance and restoration to the various archaeological sites.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Government offices to close for King's birthday

AMMAN (Petra) — All government departments and public institutions will remain closed on Thursday on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, according to a communique issued Saturday by Prime Minister Taher Masri.

Syrian educational delegation arrives

AMMAN (Petra) — A Syrian educational delegation arrived in Amman Saturday on a five-day visit to Jordan at the invitation of the Ministry of Education. The Syrian delegation will hold talks with officials from the ministry on the way to promote and bolster cooperation between Jordan and Syria in educational fields.

38,109 more expatriates return

AMMAN (Petra) — The number of Jordanian expatriates who returned from Kuwait since the beginning of last August until Nov. 8 reached 38,109, according to sources at the Interior Ministry's Returnees Welfare Committee. The sources said that the committee had supplied the names of needy returnees to local voluntary societies which expressed readiness to offer assistance to them while others were referred to the Ministry of Social Development's Health Insurance Department to provide them with health services free of charge.

Jordan and China to expand cooperation in protection of environment

AMMAN (Petra) — The head of a visiting Chinese delegation told Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzak Tubeishat that China was ready to increase its cooperation with Jordan in matters related to the protection of the environment and is willing to prepare an agreement for such cooperation.

The delegation, which represents the National China Environment Protection Agency, met the minister and technicians and workers employed at the ministry's Environment Department — to discuss such cooperation.

Dr. Tubeishat briefed the delegation on Jordan's endeavours to protect the environment and the strategy it has prepared to implement its various requirements.

Jordan, the minister said, maintains close cooperation with regional and international orga-

nisations and nations in environment-protection fields.

The minister expressed hope that China would cooperate with Jordan in this area and would exchange expertise and information related to safeguarding the environment.

Another visiting Chinese delegation concerned with economic and trade matters held meetings Saturday with officials at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply and the Amman Chamber of Trade.

Ministry Secretary General Marwan Awad explained to delegation members Jordan's law on encouraging investments which offers industrialists and investors a host of incentives and privileges.

Mr. Awad said that Jordan was also keen on promoting its trade relations with China and adjusting the balance of trade which is now in favour of China.

WHAT'S GOING ON

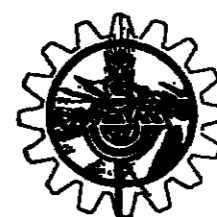
The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "The Arab Traditional House, Selected Items of our Heritage" by Hana Sadeq Burdon at Baladna Gallery, Gardens Street.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Graphic Arts of the 60s" (from the Federal Republic of Germany) at the Abdel Hamzed Shoman Foundation gallery (open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.).
- ★ Exhibition of traditional embroidery and handmade items at the Marriott Hotel.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings depicting scenes from Aqaba and Jordan by Jordanian artist Kamal Shahrwi Yassa at the Blossing Bank Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Samira Abdul Wahab at the Royal Cultural Centre.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture, in French, entitled "Rinshad en Maroccan" by Pascal Tourin at the French Cultural Centre — 6 p.m.



THE ARAB POTASH COMPANY LIMITED
I.F.B. No. 30-4857-39-516
(FLOATING TRACKED HARVESTERS)

The Arab Potash Company announces the floating of this tender for the supply of two (2) carnallite harvesters, which will collect the carnallite from the company solar pans system in Safi/Jordan.

The manufacturing companies willing to participate are invited to obtain the tender documents at a non-refundable price of (150 J.D.) from the company offices in Shmeisani-Amman before the closing date, the noon of Saturday 11/01/1992.

Three (3) copies of each bid are required and each copy to be provided in two (2) separate envelopes, one for the technical bid and the other for the commercial bid.

A.Y. Ensour
Managing Director

Jordan Times

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahd Al Fanek

Ministry of Finance embarks on economic adjustment

THE Ministry of Finance announced last week a comprehensive package of reforms regarding customs duty on imports and consumption or excise tax on domestic production. The changes were in both directions. In general, customs duties on imports of 205 commodities were lowered, while the rates of consumption tax on local industrial production were raised thus pushing local producers to improve their competitiveness.

When the new measures were revealed to the press, they had already been put into effect, one day earlier. This is a normal precaution taken against possible exploitation of advanced knowledge by some dealers who may be able to learn about the alterations ahead of others.

This reform should not be seen as an isolated measure. Most likely, it is the first part of the new economic adjustment programme which the government has just adopted and conveyed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation in a draft letter of intent, which was approved by the Ministerial Economic Council.

The main objective of this first step was to secure more resources to the budget. The government is almost committed to raise the salaries and wages in the public sector by some JD 45 million in 1992. At the same time, the government has under-

taken to reduce the deficit of the budget, before grants and loans, by JD 35 million.

This means that the government will be obliged to look for more revenue sources or less expenditure items in the range of JD 80 million during 1992.

The deficit in the draft budget of 1992 is expected to top JD 445 million before foreign grants, or JD 387 million after the grants.

This is a huge deficit which is not acceptable. Funds must be secured one way or another to cover the gap. The means may not be other than foreign borrowing which is not available nor desirable, or internal borrowing from the Central Bank which may ignite domestic inflation and rock the present comfortable stability of the dinar exchange rate which was sustained for 24 months.

The only remaining sources to cover the fiscal deficit is to try to capitalise and reschedule interest due to foreign creditors, amounting to JD 212 million in 1992, and to obtain fresh financing from the IMF, the World Bank, and other foreign countries which used to support the Jordanian treasury, such as Japan, America and the European countries, especially Germany.

However, the capitalisation of interest and rescheduling of

interest and principal, and the access to fresh facilities are not possible unless Jordan adopts a credible economic adjustment programme, approved by the IMF. Creditors showed their willingness to reschedule their debts, and donating countries showed their willingness to extend support to the Jordanian budget, but only if Jordan demonstrated that such steps will help in the implementation of a serious adjustment process which will eventually help Jordan achieve a higher degree of financial self-sufficiency. No one is ready to forego some of our financial obligations or to extend more aid to us simply to postpone the point of crisis, or to enable us to step up our imports, increase our consumption and improve the quality of our lives.

Finally, one has to appreciate the government's attempt to safeguard the lower-income groups of the population to the extent possible. It has reduced taxes on food items, and on supplies particularly needed by children and students, while increasing the taxes on more luxurious commodities that are more likely to be bought and consumed by better off groups. This was a step towards redistribution of income in the right social direction. It shows that the burden of the coming sacrifices will fall on middle and high classes.

Time for new thinking

MOHAMMAD Arkoun, an Algerian scholar, yesterday evening was telling a packed hall at the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation that the Arab-Muslim innovative thinking had come to a halt 10 centuries ago. He said that if a real Arab-Muslim renaissance were to be achieved they had to re-examine their modes of thinking, their history. He urged that religious scripts, whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim, be re-read under the lens of new scientific methods of research.

Dr. Arkoun, together with an increasing number of Arab and Muslim scholars, have been very critical of today's Arab thought. They contend that Arab thinking has been straightjacketed for a long time.

Those scholars urge their students and readers and audiences to venture into what Dr. Arkoun termed last night as the "unthinkable." There are areas in the human quest for knowledge that have so far been anathema to Arab-Muslim thinking.

Judging from the huge turnout at Dr. Arkoun's lecture yesterday one is inclined to believe that at long last there is a body of Arab and Muslim intellectuals who are willing to venture into areas of the unknown and the unthinkable. It is regrettable, however, that very few of those revolutionary scholars teach at Arab universities and other institutions of learning. Dr. Arkoun himself teaches Islamic studies at the Sorbonne. What is more regrettable though is the fact that no Arab university seems to be encouraging its students to think differently and to delve into genuine questioning of where we stand today and where we are heading, whether in religion, sciences, the arts and politics.

What is most urgently needed is either a leap or a diversion in our ways and modes of thinking. Because the way many of us think collectively nowadays is outmoded, outdated and at best mediocre. Furthermore, the way our institutions of learning function is often only a poor imitation of Western institutions. Unless our institutions turn into research centres and media for new thinking we will continue to move on the margin of modernity, a phenomenon that will soon leave us very much behind. We certainly lend credence to the thought that our universities here in Jordan might want to take the initiative and start the trend.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE initial success of the Palestinian delegation or the Arab delegations at the Madrid conference should not take their minds off the essential task of working hard and preparing for the next stage of the peace conference, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday. What is needed, the paper said, is coordination among the Arab parties themselves and strenuous efforts to reach a formula that can be presented as a unified stand in the next stage. The Arabs are in dire need for unity of action and stand and for pressing hard for the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, therefore, everything possible should be done to reach concerted stands as soon as possible and before the negotiations can start, the paper said. It said that the whole conference should constitute one package which entails negotiations over procedures to implement U.N. resolutions and ensure the exchange of land for peace. There must not be any room for the common Israeli enemy to achieve normalisation of relations with anyone of the parties without total consensus from all parties and it must be understood by all that nothing can be achieved from the multilateral negotiations if bilateral talks achieve no success, the paper added. To make both talks successful, said the paper, the Arab side should insist first that all U.N. resolutions and international legitimacy be implemented in full. The paper urged the Arab parties to persist in efforts designed to ensure the restoration of the full rights of the Palestinian people.

Israel's persisting and barbaric attacks on southern Lebanon's refugee camps and Lebanese villages represent an outright attempt to sabotage the Middle East peace negotiations, said Al Dussar daily Saturday. It said that Israel is one of those evil elements in the region trying to undermine the peace process because it does not want to give back land it has occupied since 1967 and does not want peace with the Arabs. To show their defiance of the peace conference Israeli settlers have just finished a new Jewish settlement on the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and are trying to set up settlements near Jenin and other parts of the West Bank, the paper said. It said that the Israeli military are coupling such measures with an escalation of repressive measures against the Palestinian people so as to provoke the Palestinians into abandoning their quest for peace. The paper said that the onslaught on peace coincided with the blast at the American University of Beirut which was obviously carried out by terrorists opposed to peace. It said that the terrorists and the Israeli agents are now active in the region not only to provoke the Arabs but also to anger the Americans and to force them to abandon their positive trend towards finding a just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

By Caryle Murphy

MADRID — The phalanx of Spanish Civil Guards mowed through the mass of television cameras and reporters like a high-speed earthmover. In their midst, barely tall enough to be seen, a black-haired woman struggled to keep up with her bodyguards' rapid pace. Smiling slightly, she wore the look of someone who realised that, for the moment, events were beyond her control. But not for long. As soon as Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi reached the podium for yet another press conference, she was back in command. A teacher by profession, a literary scholar by choice, a politician by nature, Mrs. Ashrawi likes nothing better than an opportunity to present what is her passion by birth — the Palestinian cause.

As spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation at the Middle East peace conference, Mrs. Ashrawi, 45, argued the Palestinian case with composure, conciseness and clarity. She left many of the outworn clichés and taboos surrounding this conflict cut to ribbons.

Take, for example, the man who rose at a press conference last Friday to confront her. A representative of an American Christian broadcasting outlet, he said he "didn't understand" how Mrs. Ashrawi could ask Israel "to exchange land for peace," because "when Judea and Samaria were in the hands of the Arab

World, Israel was attacked three times."

"First of all, I find your reference to 'Judea and Samaria' a statement of extreme bias, and rather offensive," Mrs. Ashrawi replied, homing in on his use of the Biblical names for the occupied West Bank. "I am a Palestinian Christian, and I know what Christianity is. I am a descendant of the first Christians in the world, and Jesus Christ was born in my country, in my land Bethlehem is a Palestinian town. So I will not accept this one-upmanship on Christianity. Nobody has the monopoly."

She then asked, "Are there any serious questions?" From start to finish, Mrs. Ashrawi's voice did not waver a decibel, up or down, from its customary level tone. Even an Israeli spokesman, Yossi Olmert, gave her performance grudging respect: "She's definitely impressive. She appears well on television."

If her people were looking for a "new image" at the conference, Mrs. Ashrawi, more than anyone else, helped give it to them. She is a woman who got her master's degree in textual criticism of Renaissance literature and then spent three years at the University of Virginia, earning a PhD in medieval literature.

But as a former dean of Birzeit University in the West Bank, Mrs. Ashrawi has dodged bullets on campus and seen four of her students killed in clashes with



Hanan Ashrawi

Israeli soldiers. She also watched in horror as television reports described the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in two Beirut refugee districts. For her, this was a turning point: "I said to myself: 'This has got to stop. Palestinians must not be an easy prey to everybody.'"

Mrs. Ashrawi says she sees languages as a key to winning that battle. It has largely been her ability to speak about the Palestinian political struggle that thrust her into the spotlight in Madrid. "I cannot separate language from substance," she said. "I don't like slogans. I don't like the sort of slick professional PR attitude, and I think that's probably

why people react positively to what I say, because I'm genuine. And I don't mince words, and I don't play games. I really like to answer questions, I don't like to manipulate."

She also attributed her status to a "historical coincidence — where ability coincided with need."

Her forte, she said, is being able "to articulate analysis and to get through to others."

"It's something I think you develop as a teacher," she said. "You're always trying to reach people, you're always trying to get them to not just believe you, but to understand as well, to understand before they believe. To convince."

Mrs. Ashrawi was born in the West Bank town of Ramallah, the youngest of five daughters. Her father, a prominent politician, was a physician in the Palestinian army set up when Britain was the colonial power in her country between the two world wars.

She lives there with her husband, Emile, a photographer, artist and filmmaker, and their two daughters, Zeina and Amal, and while she says she is not a pacifist like her husband, she believes that "military options don't solve anything."

Despite what others say, she counts impatience as "a very apparent fault in me."

"I'm very impatient with a slow pace, or with people who want to waste time and energy," she said.

Israelis, pinching themselves, see a 'Begin-isation'

By Abraham Rabinovich

JERUSALEM — In the days since the Madrid conference opened, Israelis have found themselves flirting with an outrageous notion — that a freak historical wind has swept them up and deposited them somewhere they never expected to be: on a road leading to peace.

For people accustomed to swimming on stormy seas, it is a thought almost embarrassing in its naivete. But it was difficult to shake off the message implicit in the Madrid peace conference that the world's superpowers were determined to force the nations of the Middle East, kicking and screaming, to make peace.

A sense of unreality had pervaded Israeli attitude toward the peace talks even before they opened. The sight of an Israeli delegation headed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, sitting opposite a Palestinian delegation added to this dreamlike quality, and the presence of Lebanese, Jordanian and Syrian delegations reinforced it.

What turned dream into startling reality was Mr. Shamir's speech. For the first time in his public career, he seemed to leave open the possibility of territorial concessions, without which Middle East peace must remain a mirage.

"The issue is not territory but our existence," Mr. Shamir said. "It will be regrettable if the talks focus primarily and exclusively on territory. It is the quickest way to an impasse."

Some Arabs present, notably the Syrians, chose to interpret this as a reaffirmation by Mr. Shamir of his opposition to territorial concessions. But more significant than what Mr. Shamir said was what he did not say. He had not, in this critical forum, restated his long-standing opposition to the territories-for-peace



formula.

The prime minister was asking the Arabs first to show that they truly accepted Israel's existence. "Demonstrate your readiness to accept Israel as a permanent entity in the region. Let the people hear you speak in the language of reconciliation, coexistence and peace with Israel."

The implication was that if there were a basic change in the Arab attitude, then Israel would be prepared to make territorial concessions. And the implication was clear enough for sceptical members of Israel's left to hail Mr. Shamir's speech warmly.

For the first time, too, the Israeli leader offered a vision of a Middle East economic community embracing Israel and the Arab states, something he had hitherto seemed to regard as a daydream of the political left.

"We are seeing a Begin-isation

of Shamir," said Ezer Weizman, who as a senior Likud minister had accompanied Menachem Begin to Camp David and watched the then prime minister abandon his oft-stated determination to retain Israeli control over Sinai when peace with Egypt became possible.

Mr. Weizman said that Mr. Shamir would find it difficult to retreat from his new path, even if he wanted to. "Once you enter a process like this, it's very difficult to get out," he said.

There are indications, however, that Mr. Shamir may have crossed some political Rubicon of his own and that he might not want to get out.

"He seems to be enjoying the role of peacemaker," said a member of the Israeli delegation in Madrid. Mr. Shamir had opposed the peace agreement with Egypt,

voted against Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, fought against the return of the tiny Taba enclave to Egypt and consistently rejected any notion of territorial concessions on the West Bank, Gaza or Golan Heights.

In Madrid, however, the prime minister spoke of the historic nature of the peace conference and appeared exceptionally ebullient when he met with Israeli reporters.

On the eve of the last Yom Kippur, at a time when American pressure on Israel to join the peace process had forced Mr. Shamir into this final corner, the 76-year-old prime minister attended services at Jerusalem's great synagogue. Sitting in the seat closest to the Torah ark reserved for distinguished guests, he seemed withdrawn into his thoughts. His face was grave.

An observer watching him felt that the prime minister was not weighing his own soul as cantor and choir sang but the future of the nation. Mr. Shamir's intensive reassessment of political realities culminated last month when he decided that he and not his foreign minister would go to Madrid to set out the Israeli position.

Mr. Shamir's metamorphosis — if that is what it is — is conditioned on a similar metamorphosis occurring on the Arab side, which would have to demonstrate that it is willing to accept the legitimacy of a Jewish state in the midst of the Arab World.

It is a fantastic proposition but, as Mr. Shamir has demonstrated, fantasies may be possible in the new world order, even in the Middle East — International Herald Tribune.

Mr. Rabinovich is a feature writer for the Jerusalem Post. He contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

Palestinian triumph

By Kirk T. Albrecht

"A land without a people, and a people without a land." That is how Palestine and the Palestinians have been described for the last 43 years, since the United Nations created the modern state of Israel in 1948.

But have perceptions changed in the last two weeks, following the opening of the historic Middle East peace conference? If the world, and particularly the Western press is to be believed, then certainly the Palestinians have finally arrived on the world agenda.

The myth of the Palestinians in the West for years has been that of the terrorist. In some minds, the two became synonyms. Nightly news flashed images of kuffiyeh-wrapped youths hurling stones at Israeli soldiers, fleeing into endless backalleys in towns in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They remained nameless, faceless, without an identity before much of the world. As an unknown quantity, and linked with the PLO, they brought fear to those who saw them through the two dimensions of the camera.

All the while they themselves claimed to have been a people of inhabiting the land of Palestine for thousands of years, part of the larger Arab Nation, yet with a distinct subculture all their own.

In the sentiment following the World War II, hearts were turned towards the Israelis under the cruel Nazis. But world attention, through the lens of the media, seems unable to focus on more than one item at a time. As a consequence, the Palestinians, who were at that time being pushed from their homes, having lands seized and property destroyed, were forgotten.

The opening session of the conference in Madrid was, to be sure, largely ceremonial. But the ceremony was full of

the symbolic. It was the first time the state of Israel came and actually recognised that these people before them were Palestinians, a people unto themselves, and not just a blot on "ha'aretz Israel."

The sessions themselves produced the strongest evidence that the Palestinians cannot be overlooked any more. Reporting on the conference in Madrid, the latest issue of Time magazine says: "The Palestinians were big winners... they presented an image of intelligence, professionalism, and sensitivity. Haddad, Abdal Shafi... easily trumped Shamir." Voices around the world are unanimous: if nothing else was accomplished through these initial meetings, the Palestinians presented themselves well to a captive world audience.

Saeed Erekat, a member of the Palestinian delegation to Madrid, who is best remembered for his donning of the kuffiyeh as he sat opposite a stone-faced Yitzhak Shamir, said: "The world was waiting for us, and I think the world was ready for us." Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, who served as spokesperson for the group, even received positive remarks from the Israelis on her articulate and thoughtful statements.

The United States had doubts about the Palestinians going into the conference; as one major news magazine said, the U.S. "had focused both its greatest hopes and its darkest fears on the Palestinians." In the end, most of those fears had to be abandoned.

One member of the delegation told me: "We went into the conference as the guest you invite to dinner, thinking he may ruin everything. But soon the host discovers that all the rest are vomiting, and you are helping him clean it up." This round, score one for the Palestinians.

Kirk Albrecht is a freelance writer living in Amman. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Masri: Washington best for multilaterals

(Continued from page 1)

recognize the Palestinian rights in the occupied lands," he said.

Asked whether Amman presented a timetable for Israel's withdrawal, he said Israel occupies some 400 square kilometers of Jordanian territory in the north and in Wadi Araba but negotiations over this territory will be linked with progress in the Israeli-Palestinian talks and the

on the fate of the settlements which are of concern to Jordan.

The settlements, he added, should take priority for all sides.

Asked whether he intends to reshuffle the cabinet before the coming parliamentary session, Mr. Masri said that the government was facing the new session fully relying on a wide base of support which allows it to continue its mission and its programmes, but he said, if a reshuffle helps the government to shoulder

its task he will not hesitate on making this step.

Asked whether Jordan would favour the creation of a confederation grouping Israel, Palestine and Jordan similar to the Swiss confederation, Mr. Masri said that for Jordan the priority is to ensure Israel's return of all lands to their lawful owners and the right of the Palestinian people in their homeland. Any other ideas can be discussed after achieving the first goals, he said.

Water — the rare Mideast commodity

(Continued from page 1)

may take action to precipitate a crisis to change the status quo," Prof. Nafi asserted. "The water war is only a scenario but unless the problem is solved there is definitely going to be a great deal of domestic dislocation and destabilization because thirsty people will not sit for the negotiations to find a solution."

So if Israel has overwhelming military capability and controls the sources feeding the Jordan River, why should it relinquish its hold in what has been described as a "zero-sum security issue?"

Israel, in the most advantageous position, "gets whatever water comes from the occupied Golan Heights and the occupation gives it an upper riparian position; it uses all

the consumable water of the Jordan River basin, takes 100 mcm/year of water out of the Yarmouk River, sits on the waters of the Litani and Awali rivers and is in a position to take that water if the situation becomes critical," according to university of Michigan Professor John Kolars. "So what incentives would Israel need to change the status quo?"

The incentives is what comes with peace and the opportunities it offers, said Prof. Nafi, but the U.S. will have to use its political and economic influence with the principal users of the Jordan basin to break deadlocks expected in the talks and encourage positive action, especially with Israel.

Experts say that peace agreements would guarantee

the stability of water supplies and allow the countries to organise, plan and equitably apportion the water on a basin-wide basis.

"Peace gives the opportunity to develop economic cooperation that benefits everyone; this would attract a great deal of international support and investment to make this possible," said Prof. Kolars.

But analysts agree that short of solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, basinwide cooperative agreements for sharing the basin's water are unlikely. They also warn that a political solution is not likely to occur in time to stave off a major water driven crisis between states or, more likely, domestically.

Syria and PLO reconciled

(Continued from page 1)

pent, said Syria wanted peace but rejected any surrender of Arab rights.

"During the opening of the conference, the sessions and even after the start of bilateral talks, Syria foiled many Israeli manoeuvres," Mr. Allaf said.

"World opinion was able to confirm the pure Arab desire for peace. We succeeded in proving the falsehood of Israel's claims that Arabs did not want peace because..."

Mr. Allaf reiterated Syria's calls for a comprehensive solution, saying any settlement

should not only include the return of the occupied Golan Heights but also all other occupied Arab lands and the restoration of Palestinian rights.

Mr. Allaf said Damascus had informed the co-sponsors of the conference, the Soviet Union and the United States, that it did not reject in principle the third stage of the peace talks — multilateral meetings on broad, secondary issues like arms control and water rights.

"Syria wants only that these talks be held at an appropriate time, linking the start of these

talks with seriousness in the bilateral talks," he said.

"If Israel is really serious about building confidence with the Arabs it should end its occupation of Arab lands. It should have pledged officially that it would withdraw from all occupied Arab territories and recognise the Palestinian people's rights."

"The Arab negotiator, now goes to the talks armed with the confidence of his people and the confidence of the international community because he is going to demand what is required by the international community."

Turkey to allow hijackers to leave

(Continued from page 1)

and Chechen troops was reported taking place at a military airfield in Grozny, which lies 300 kilometres across the Caucasus mountains from Turkey's northern border.

Turkey's commercial Star-1 television channel quoted officials as saying that passengers were in good health.

Witnesses at Ankara's Esenboga civilian airport said the aircraft stood parked under floodlights in a remote corner of the airport near VIP lounge.

They said the doors of the plane were closed and no move-

ment could be seen inside. The airport remained open for normal traffic.

Turkey's security chief Unal Erkan, Ambassador Riza Turmen from the Foreign Ministry and Ankara Governor Sahinoglu communicated with the hijackers from the control tower.

Anatolian said the hijackers refused to talk to Soviet embassy officials.

Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi said in Moscow that the plane was hijacked by four armed rebels on its way from the southern spa town of Mineral-

nye Vody to Yekaterinburg (formerly Sverdlovsk) in the Urals.

He said the hijackers had four grenades and four pistols.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin sent troops on Saturday to pacify the Checheno-Ingushetia republic where a rebel leader, General Djokhar Dudayev, has declared martial law.

The rebel region's army minister, Yusup Soslanbekov, told reporters that 800 to 1,000 Russian interior ministry troops had landed at Grozny but were surrounded by Chechen forces.

American politicians apologise for shortcomings

By Michael Posner
Reuter

WASHINGTON — In a sudden outbreak of humility in the U.S. Senate, some prominent politicians have confessed their shortcomings to their voters and promised to mend their ways.

Senator Edward Kennedy, a Democrat, conceded in a speech in his home state of Massachusetts last month that he had personal faults. He did not specify them but highly publicised reports have mentioned womanising and drinking.

Assistant Republican Senate leader Alan Simpson admitted being too "cocky" and told his Wyoming voters he would handle his personality differently.

Howard Metzenbaum, another Democrat, apologised in an Ohio newspaper for harsh criticism of a Senate witness with an unproven charge the man had sexually harassed a woman.

How unusual were these

admissions?

"They're worried," said Washington political scientist Stephen Hess.

"Being a senator means you never had to say you're sorry." He said the senators must have been reading opinion polls or talking to aides who told them they could be in trouble with the electorate.

Senate historian Don Ritchie agreed it is rare for a senator to apologise for personal traits. But that's what each did.

Appearing at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government named after his late brother, Mr. Kennedy said: "I recognise my own shortcomings, the faults in the conduct of my private life. I realise that I alone am responsible for them, and I am the one who must confront them."

In 1969 he appealed for support from Massachusetts voters after the Chappaquiddick tragedy when a young political worker,

Mary Jo Kopechne, drowned in a pond, trapped in a car Mr. Kennedy had been driving after they attended a party.

Mr. Kennedy's admission of personal failings came a week before the start of the trial of his nephew, William Kennedy Smith, charged with raping a woman at the family's oceanfront mansion in Palm Beach, Florida.

Polls show that Mr. Kennedy's usual unshakable popularity as the Liberal standardbearer in Congress, has plunged in Massachusetts since Mr. Smith was charged with rape after a night on the town with his uncle and Kennedy's son Patrick last March 30.

The senator is expected to be a star witness at the trial.

Due to widespread reports of his personal life, many citizens raised eyebrows at the appropriateness of his sitting on the Senate panel which questioned people's morals at Clarence Thomas's Supreme Court nomination hearings last month, even though

Mr. Kennedy is respected as a hard-working senator.

All three senators are members of the Judiciary Committee, which attracted millions of television viewers watching law Professor Anita Hill accusing Mr. Thomas of sexually harassing her in the 1980s.

Opinion polls showed those spectacular sessions dropped the already low esteem in which the people regard Congress, even though they routinely reelect individual senators and members of the House of Representatives.

The much-criticised televised Senate hearings came shortly after recent revelations that dozens of House members bounced checks at a private house bank, failed to pay restaurant bills and got parking violations fixed with police.

"It was political expediency," Jack Gargan, who heads a grassroots group committed to defeating congressional incumbents, said of the senators' apologies. "They know the heat is on."

An NBC television poll showed more people lost respect for both Senate Republicans and Democrats as a result of the hearings. A Gallup poll showed people had more unfavourable than favourable views of Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Metzenbaum.

Mr. Simpson fared better. Seventeen per cent of those polled felt unfavourable towards him 41 per cent were favourable.

"Nevertheless, Mr. Simpson apologised for his attacks on Mr. Hill."

"I have been riding high, a bit too cocky, arrogant, yeah, too smart by half sometimes," he said.

Mr. Metzenbaum also regretted harshly attacking John Doggett, a Thomas defender at the hearings, by making an unsworn allegation that Mr. Doggett had sexually harassed a female worker.

Miyazawa striking contrast to predecessor

TOKYO (AP) — Fluent in English and a master of insider politics, Kiichi Miyazawa is a striking contrast to Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, the man he has been chosen to replace.

Mr. Miyazawa, elected president of the governing Liberal Democratic Party on Sunday and scheduled for approval by parliament as prime minister next week, is known for his wide government experience and intellectual prowess.

Mr. Kaifu, by comparison, was little known when party leaders chose him as a temporary figurehead leader after the Recruit influence-buying scandal in 1989 that cost Mr. Miyazawa his post as finance minister.

The 72-year-old Miyazawa has

served in most key cabinet posts and enjoys a reputation as an expert policy-maker with a good grasp of economics. He has garnered laurels from a career spent in international conferences and diplomatic missions.

His resume resembles that of the man who will be one of his most important counterparts — U.S. President George Bush, a former ambassador to the United Nations, envoy to Peking, CIA director and vice president.

Also in contrast to Mr. Kaifu, Mr. Miyazawa has indicated that he intends to be a formidable negotiating partner for U.S. leaders in trade talks.

At a news conference earlier this month, Mr. Miyazawa warned against protectionist sentiment in the U.S. Congress and said Japan had done almost all it could to reduce its gaping trade surplus with the United States.

But he also called for strengthening the U.S.-Japan partnership. An opportunity to do just that will come late next month when Mr. Bush visits Tokyo.

"We should try to contemplate how we can jointly make a contribution in the international community," Mr. Miyazawa said.

"My hope is that both leaders could declare something that could be named the 'Tokyo declaration.'"

In nearly 50 years of statesmanship, Mr. Miyazawa has developed close personal links with the West. They include longstanding acquaintances with Mr. Bush, Secretary of State James Baker and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. His daughter, Keiko, is married to an American diplomat.



Kiichi Miyazawa

Minoru Hirano, a political columnist for the newspaper Yomiuri, wrote that even former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita "is rumoured to hold Miyazawa in the same sort of awe."

Indeed, some analysts think Mr. Miyazawa's aloofness from the wheeling and dealing of party politics is what kept him out of the prime minister's chair for so long.

"I am the son of a congressman and the grandson of another. I know the backstage, the kitchen, of politics. I was determined not to enter it — but was drawn into it reluctantly," he said in a 1977 magazine interview.

He was drawn in too deeply during the Recruit scandal, when he was one of a group of senior government leaders forced to resign.

Unlike the greener Kaifu, many of whose policy initiatives failed, Mr. Miyazawa also benefits from numerous contacts in

the bureaucracy, a requisite for any would-be mover and shaker in Japanese politics.

As finance minister in the late 1980s, Mr. Miyazawa favoured heavy public spending, tax cuts and lower interest rates.

He also has called for Japan to make greater efforts to help debtor nations, saying the nation should be more "philanthropic-minded."

An avid supporter of the nation's three "non-nuclear principles" — neither possessing, manufacturing nor introducing nuclear arms — Mr. Miyazawa has said Japan should take more initiative in promoting global nuclear arms reduction.

Mr. Miyazawa was born in Fukuyama near Hiroshima on Oct. 8, 1919, and graduated from Tokyo University, the nation's premier school. As a member of the privileged few to pass the diplomatic service examination, he entered the Finance Ministry in 1942 and served there through World War II.

During the American occupation, when U.S. forces wielded tremendous influence in Japanese affairs, Mr. Miyazawa worked for Hayato Ikeda, then finance minister under the government of Shigeru Yoshida.

He acted as secretary and interpreter in Washington talks between Ikeda and John Foster Dulles, the secretary of state under President Dwight Eisenhower, in talks that led to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and formation of Japan's self-defence forces.

Mr. Miyazawa later followed his mentor, Mr. Ikeda, into politics. And like Mr. Ikeda, who formed his own party faction and became prime minister in 1960, Mr. Miyazawa eventually came to head a faction, the second largest of five.

Mr. Miyazawa's first cabinet post was director general of the Economic Planning Agency in 1962. He later served as minister of international trade and industry and foreign minister in the 1970s.

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Dior enters Paris Bourse next month

PARIS (R) — Christian Dior will in December become the second French fashion house to be quoted on the Paris Bourse, following in rival Yves Saint Laurent's wake.

A spokesman for Dior's parent company, Societe Financiere Agache, has said shares would probably be introduced onto the market through a public sale in early December.

Yves Saint Laurent's share flotation in July 1989 met such an enthusiastic public response, with the offer heavily oversubscribed, that many Paris fashion houses dreamt of cashing in on their world-famous labels.

But the Gulf crisis depressed share prices and created a climate of financial uncertainty, prompting Dior executives to delay their long-cherished flotation plans until now.

Christian Dior S.A. will be

float on the Paris cash market, where shares in smaller companies are traded.

The Agache spokesman said Dior would increase its capital by 1.06 billion francs (\$185 million) ahead of the flotation by selling 2.86 million new shares at 370 francs (\$64) each to companies already holding stakes in Christian Dior.

Currency	New York Close Date 7/11/1991	New York Close Date 8/11/1991
Sterling Pound	1.7700	1.7647
Deutsche Mark	1.6425	1.6465
Swiss Franc	1.4500	1.4535
French Franc	5.6115	5.6295
Japanese Yen	130.05	130.38
European Currency Unit	1.2495	1.2425

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.75	4.93	4.93	5.06
Sterling Pound	10.37	10.25	10.12	10.06
Deutsche Mark	8.87	9.18	9.18	9.18
Swiss Franc	7.50	7.57	7.87	7.87
French Franc	9.16	9.18	9.18	9.18
Japanese Yen	6.28	6.18	5.90	5.82
European Currency Unit	9.18	9.71	9.75	9.78

Gold	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Silver	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	351.25	6.30	Silver	4.015	.088

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6840	0.6860
Sterling Pound	1.2067	1.2127
Deutsche Mark	0.4152	0.4173
Swiss Franc	0.4708	0.4732
French Franc	0.1215	0.1221
Japanese Yen	0.5250	0.5276
Dutch Guilder	0.3685	0.3705
Swedish Krona	0.1137	0.1143
Italian Lira	0.0552	0.0555
Belgian Franc	0.02015	0.02025

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7850	1.7950
Lebanese Lira	0.0775	0.0780
Saudi Riyal	0.1821	0.1831
Kuwaiti Dinar	—	—
Qatari Riyal	0.1855	0.1865
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2100
Omani Riyal	1.7510	1.7610
UAE Dirham	0.1855	0.1865
Greek Drachma	0.3500	0.3800
Cypriot Pound	1.4700	1.4800

Index	30/10/1991 Close	6/11/1991 Close
All-Share	124.66	124.30
Banking Sector	105.45	104.80
Insurance Sector	125.08	126.03
Industry Sector	154.00	153.91
Services Sector	132.52	132.78

December 31, 1990 = 100

Vatican forecasts '92 deficit to remain at \$86 m

VATICAN CITY (R) — The Vatican has said its projected budget deficit for 1992 would remain stable at about \$86 million.

A statement released after a meeting of a committee of cardinals who oversee Vatican finances said the Holy See expected income of about \$92 million and expenses of \$178 million, leaving a deficit of \$86 million.

It was the same amount as the 1990 deficit, which was a record, and that of a revised projected 1991 deficit.

Earlier this year the 1991 deficit had been projected at a new record of \$91.5 million.

The Holy See's budget covers the Catholic church's central administration, including its diplomatic missions around the world, its newspaper and Vatican Radio.

Income comes mostly from investments, real estate holdings in Italy and contributions from the faithful.

The statement said that as in the past, most of the deficit would be covered by "Peter's pence," a special collection dating back 12 centuries which is taken up once a year in Roman Catholic churches around the world for the Pope's personal use.

Before the Holy See began running huge deficits in the mid-1980s, "Peter's pence" was traditionally destined for overseas missions and other charitable works.

Japanese banks to lend Romania \$1 billion

BUCHAREST (AP) — Japanese banks will lend hard-currency strapped Romania \$1 billion for modernising its dilapidated transport system, Transport Minister Traian Basescu has said.

The loan would be one of the largest credit packages ever received by Romania. It also appeared to reflect developing economic relations between Romania and Western countries, which have shunned it because of suspicion that a post-communist authorities were not fully committed to democracy and free markets.

The state news agency Rompres reported that foreign investment in Romania has reached a total value of \$120 million, with 4,767 companies funded partly or totally from 91 foreign countries. Mr. Basescu told a news conference the Japanese loan takes effect Dec. 1.

Mexican president proposes sweeping agricultural reforms

MEXICO CITY (R) — President Carlos Salinas has moved to reform Mexico's antiquated system of land tenure by proposing an end to a ban on private-sector ownership of half the national territory.

The reform is contained in a bill Mr. Salinas presented to the congress that proposes ending all free land distribution to peasants. The legislation would lift a longstanding ban on private-sector ownership of ejidos — small plots of farm land carved out of large estates expropriated after the 1910-1917 revolution and handed out to millions of landless peasants.

The country's 28,000 ejidos cover 100 million hectares (250 million acres) of land or roughly half the national territory, a government official said.

The proposed reforms, virtually guaranteed passage by the ruling party-controlled congress, would allow corporations to buy land or win control of it through joint ventures.

Unlike other farmers, the ejidos' nominal owners are prohibited by current legislation from mortgaging their property as collateral for bank loans. They have long been dependent on an inefficient and chaotic state bureaucracy and criticised for low productivity.



Carlos Salinas

Mr. Salinas's reforms are sure to draw criticism from leftist parties and peasant organisations wary of increasing private control over agriculture.

But the preamble to the bill presented to congress notes that Mexico's population growth has outstripped increases in agricultural production for the past 25 years and that the countryside is urgently in need of reform.

"Rural income, on average, is almost three times lower than in the rest of the economy and a majority of the residents of rural Mexico live in poverty," says the bill, adding that the average Mexican farmer has less than five hectares (12 acres) of land.

Mr. Salinas's reforms would end the longstanding practice of agrarian reform under which Mexican presidents have distributed millions of acres of land to poor peasant families since the revolution, which was fought under the battle-cry of "land and liberty."

Mr. Salinas's reforms would maintain the existing ban on the accumulation of large tracts of land by private farmers — a ban often violated by "small landholders" using several different family names to build up estates.

Abu Dhabi may lose \$5b in BCCI scam

LONDON (R) — Abu Dhabi stands to lose a huge sum of perhaps \$5 billion in the BCCI bank scandal, the Financial Times (F.T.) said Saturday.

The emirate's ruler, Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and Abu Dhabi institutions are majority shareholders in the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), closed on July 5 in a world swoop by banking regulators who suspected a colossal fraud.

The Financial Times published the first of seven articles under the headline "the biggest bank fraud in history" after what it said was its own three-month investigation.

It said figures assembled for the first time showed Abu Dhabi's total exposure was \$9.4 billion, more than \$6 billion having been pumped in to try to prevent the bank's collapse in its last 15 months of trading.

"Abu Dhabi may recoup some of this as the bank is liquidated, but over half, the F.T. believes, is gone for good," the Financial Times said.

It said Abu Dhabi's ruler put in some \$2.2 billion after a dramatic encounter with the bank's president, Pakistan-based Agha Hassan Abedi, who, recovering from a heart transplant, flew to plead for help in early 1990.

The Financial Times said the Abu Dhabi ruler was reported to have said: "You look after your health. I'll look after your bank."

The newspaper said it was not

until several months later that he learned he had been asked to bail out what is now estimated to be history's biggest bank fraud.

The newspaper said it had put together the pieces of the BCCI jig saw in a story ranging "from the brothels of Lahore to the remote Scottish islands."

It said regulators from several nations had codenamed BCCI "Sandstorm." They met in London last July 2 to consider, in what was "a sickening moment," new evidence suggesting that suspected fraud at BCCI was on an incalculable scale.

They then had to decide whether to risk a political storm by closing it. Asking Abu Dhabi to cover the vast losses was no longer an option. A rapid swoop was decided upon.

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Albania launches broad price reform programme

TIRANA (R) — Albania's coalition government, facing growing industrial unrest, has lifted more than 90 per cent of price controls to encourage free competition between enterprises, finance ministry officials have said.

They said increases in prices for goods such as oil, gas, cement, cables and other important industrial materials would still be government controlled, and would be set in accordance with world market standards.

But state enterprises now would be able to set prices for their products freely and in agreement with each other.

"Many enterprises may close down or change their activity if unable to resist the competition imposed by the new prices," finance ministry spokesman Ilija Samsuri told Reuters.

The liberalisation of prices took place against a background of strikes by Albanian miners and oil workers who want better working conditions and whose industrial action is threatening to paralyse the country's industry and transport.

"The situation is critical," Reshat Ibrahim, an opposition trade union leader, said.

"The strikes risk to provoke a national crisis if they expand to larger districts," he added.

The lifting of price controls marks the first step in a reform programme adopted by Albania's multi-party parliament last October to introduce a free market economy.

"The price reform may seem austere to the population but people are prepared for it, they have been expecting it," Mr. Samsuri said.

"It will improve the situation of the state budget by removing the subsidy burden and will curb speculation by private dealers who sell state factory products at excessively high prices on the black market," he said.

The least 25 per cent of enterprises in Albania receive state subsidies, and thousands of workers in factories which have halted production due to shortages of raw materials are being retained at 80 per cent of their salary.

U.S. debt bazaar winds down but only for 3 months

WASHINGTON (R) — A three-day auction of U.S. government securities that ended Thursday is a sort of debt bazaar, an official borrowing binge to finance spending deficits reaching new records every year.

Unlike a cap-in-hand consumer, the Treasury Department can raise \$38 billion fairly handily by pledging repayment backed by "the full faith and credit" of the U.S. government.

Though that government now has accumulated debts of \$3,707,595,000,000, it also has the wherewithal to make its word good — by squeezing the taxpayer in whose name it runs up the debt.

The treasury goes to the well every three months in a three-day event called the "quarterly refunding" to replenish its supply of borrowed money.

It has no choice except to do so, since the government spent a record \$268.7 billion more than it took in during the 1991 financial year that ended Sept. 30. It is headed for a new estimated record deficit of around \$350 billion in the current tax year — all of it covered by borrowing.

But the auctions this time, beginning Tuesday with a sale of \$14 billion of three-year notes and including \$12 billion each of 10-year notes in Wednesday and 30-year bonds on Thursday, were not tidy.

Changes in the rules for bidding, intended to open the market up to more dealers because of the admission earlier this year by Salomon Bros Inc. that it cheated in previous auctions to try to corner the market, were partly blamed.

With more people in the market, dealers bid cautiously for the notes on the first two days. The Tuesday and Wednesday auctions pushed up costs for the treasury — and the American taxpayer — by tens of millions of dollars in higher interest over the life of the securities because the notes had to offer a higher return to attract investors.

For example, the treasury said its sale of 10-year notes produced

an average yield of 7.53 per cent, which was above the expected 7.51 per cent to 7.52 per cent, which meant the government was forced to pay more than expected to raise the money.

However, on Thursday there was strong demand for the government's 30-year bonds, which signalled lower interest rates.

Yield is a measure of the combined interest offered on the security, or the coupon rate, and its purchase price. It is expressed as an annual percentage that an investor can expect to earn on his purchase.

Samuel Kahan, chief economist with Fuji Securities Inc. in Chicago, said rule changes that include written verification of big winning bids and potential participation of hundreds more broker-dealer bidders have made the auction process much more volatile.

Traders are cautious because they must cover their "order books" or prior orders, very quickly in a situation where there is less information available about who is bidding how much in bids that must arrive at the treasury in downtown Washington or at a Federal Reserve Bank at fixed times.

Egyptian tourism picks up

CAIRO (R) — Tourists are visiting the Pyramids and cruising down the Nile once more and Egypt's tourism minister said he expects record numbers in the coming year.

Tourism revenues fell by over \$2 billion during the Gulf crisis, according to official estimates. Luxury hotels stood deserted and Nile cruisers lay idle.

"We expect a 10 per cent increase from the old peak in the number of tourists to about three million during the next financial year," said Tourism Minister Fouad Sultan in an interview. "This would be a new all-time high."

The previous peak was reached in the fiscal year to June 1990, when tourism earnings reached \$2.4 billion.

Samir Darwish, deputy chairman of Egypt's Tourist Board, said Arab-Israeli peace talks should entice more visitors to the region. "This is a very sensitive industry," he said. "Once you have peace, more people will be encouraged."

Europeans are flocking in on package tours but tourism from the United States, which has dropped steadily since the mid-1980s, is still slack.

Hoteliers say Americans are still worried about terrorism.

Tourism is vulnerable to Western perceptions of the Middle East as a war-torn den of terrorists. But Mr. Sultan said he expected Egypt to benefit from its support of the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq in the Gulf war. Egypt sent some 40,000 troops to the force that drove Iraq from Kuwait.

"Egypt's image improved substantially during the crisis. We were a key ally and this should help," he said.

Cairo streets are once more filled with puzzled Westerners trying to decipher street names. Convoys of air-conditioned coaches can be seen parked by the Pyramids every day, while boatmen again play their sails up and down the Nile.

Hoteliers said room occupancy was running at over 85 per cent. "We have seen a dramatic return," said Andrew Houghton, marketing manager of the Marriott Hotel in Cairo. "There seems to have been a frustrated demand to visit the area."

UAE imports rise sharply

DUBAI (R) — The United Arab Emirates' (UAE's) non-oil external trade increased 16 per cent in 1990 to 57.71 billion dirham from 49.73 billion dirham in 1989, the Emirates news agency (WAM) has said.

It quoted a statement from the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry as saying imports last year amounted to about 42.5 billion dirham compared with 37.0 billion dirham in 1989.

It said exports rose to 3.6 billion dirham from 3.46 billion in 1989 and reexports increased to 11.6 billion dirham from 9.3 billion dirham.

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U.S. to apply sanctions against Yugoslavia; Dubrovnik shelled

THE HAGUE (R) — President George Bush said Saturday the United States will apply sanctions against Yugoslavia and will co-sponsor a United Nations resolution calling for an oil embargo against the country.

"We will apply sanctions on Yugoslavia comparable to those of the EC," Mr. Bush told a news conference.

"The EC can also depend on the United States to co-sponsor a new U.N. Security Council resolution on Yugoslavia looking toward a possible oil embargo and cooperate fully in efforts to strengthen an embargo on arms exports to Yugoslavia," he added.

Mr. Bush spoke after holding talks with European Community leaders.

The EC imposed broad economic sanctions on Yugoslavia Friday after the warring factions refused to abide by a 12th cease-fire agreed in the Hague Tuesday.

The EC sanctions suspend trade concessions, ban imports of Yugoslav textiles and drop Belgrade from a 24-nation recovery programme for Eastern Europe.

The EC also urged the U.N. Security Council to impose an oil embargo to cut off fuel to the warring Serbian and Croatian forces.

The Security Council's five permanent members — the Un-

ited States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France — are due to discuss the question of an oil embargo late Monday, diplomats said.

The Security Council imposed an arms embargo on Yugoslavia on Sept. 25.

The EC has led international efforts to broker a peace accord in the disintegrating Balkan federation but an EC-sponsored peace conference in the Hague has failed to make any headway.

Heavy fighting continued Saturday as Yugoslav navy gunboats shelled Croatia's Adriatic port of Dubrovnik and fierce battles were reported in the east of the breakaway republic.

At least 2,500 Croats and an unknown number of Serbs and federal troops have been killed in fighting since Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in June.

Zagreb Radio said the attack on Dubrovnik, a mediaeval city under siege since the start of October, began after dawn.

"Dubrovnik is reverberating with explosions," it said.

A Reuters correspondent in the walled town reported that four warships were bombarding Croatian positions around the old city and that normal telephone and telex communications with the outside world had been cut.

The scale of the fighting in Croatia was unaffected by the decision of the European Community to impose economic sanctions on Yugoslavia.

Croatian authorities maintained a blackout on news from the eastern Croatian city of Vukovar where hand-to-hand fighting with federal troops was reported by the Tanjug News Agency.

It said 22 Croatian defenders were captured Friday during fierce clashes a few hundred metres from the centre of the town which has been under attack by the army for almost three months.

Vukovar, on Croatia's border with Serbia, has become a symbol of Croatian resistance to Serbian-led federal forces. Some 14,000 Croats are trapped there.

The commander of the Croatian forces in the town warned this week that its fall was imminent as a result of dwindling supplies of ammunition and food.

The tenacity of its defenders has become an increasing challenge to federal forces which have been unable to take it despite vastly superior firepower, including aircraft which Croatia does not possess.

Tanjug also reported heavy fighting involving artillery and mortar fire in the Nova Gradiska area of central Croatia Saturday. A Yugoslav Air Force pilot was

believed to have been captured by Croat forces Friday when his plane was shot down over Pag Island Friday, it added.

Croatian Prime Minister Franjo Greguric said on television: "It is still not clear that Europe is making any deep distinction between aggressor and victim."

He chided the EC countries for divisions between them on how to deal with the crisis and added: "With these sanctions, Europe has thrown the burden of responsibility on the United Nations."

"It will be the United Nations which will have to make the final decision about economic sanctions."

In Belgrade, Petar Kumdric, secretary-general of the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia, described the measures as a "great injustice" to Serbia and their allies.

"Arrogant Europe put into action its threat of poverty and hunger for those in Yugoslavia who are faced with a defensive war for political, economic, cultural and even biological survival."

Yugoslav economists believe the country's economy has been so badly damaged by the conflict that the effect of sanctions will barely be felt.

"No boycott could ever do what we have already done to ourselves," said Ljubomir Madzari, a professor of economics at Belgrade University.

Bush says racism, nationalism threaten democracy in E. Europe

THE HAGUE (R) — U.S. President George Bush warned Saturday that racism disguised as nationalism threatened the spread of democracy in Eastern Europe and urged European Community efforts to end the Yugoslav conflict.

Bush, in remarks prepared for delivery before European Community leaders, also urged support for reforms in the Soviet Union and cautioned that Europe and America "must try to help because 'desperate times breed demagogues'."

"Some fear democracy's new freedoms will be used not to build new trust, but to settle old scores," Mr. Bush said, pointing to the fighting in Yugoslavia as an example.

"All of Europe has awakened to the dangers of an old enemy: A nationalism animated by hatred and unmoved by nobler ends," Mr. Bush said.

He said no one needed to fear healthy national pride but added: "We must guard against nationalism of a more sinister sort: One that pits nation against nation and citizen against citizen. There can be no place for these old animosities in the New

Europe."

"We see in Yugoslavia how the proud name of nationalism can splinter a country into bloody civil war," Mr. Bush said, adding that he supported European Community efforts to end the Yugoslav conflict.

Bush said it was time to write the final chapter of the cold war and urged EC leaders to "help the nations of the East secure the freedoms they have won."

"It is time now to say to these new democracies we will help you," he said, but did not offer any specific types of support.

He told the group the United States welcomed the growth of the EC into a major economic force, and said Washington wanted to work as a partner rather than become a competitor.

"We must guard against the danger that old cold war allies will become new economic adversaries — old warriors turned trade warriors," he said.

"There are signs on both sides of the Atlantic that this could happen," he said. "Shrill voices on both sides peddle protectionism as the path to prosperity. That way lies economic ruin — a prescription for plunging us

into the kind of impoverishing rivalry that ravaged our economies during the great depression."

Declaring that great progress has been made tearing down international trade barriers, Bush warned that "that progress will mean little if the world aligns itself into warring trade blocs."

In discussing the Soviet Union, where President Mikhail Gorbachev has called for massive help from the West, Mr. Bush said "the people everywhere in that vast land want change."

He said that "no shortcut can spare them suffering and hardship as they dig out from under 70 years of misrule."

"A harsh winter, hard times, lie ahead, and desperate times breed demagogues," he said, adding that America and Europe share a common interest in helping reforms succeed.

"Together, we must act to support the forces of liberty, democracy and free enterprise in that troubled region," he said.

Mr. Bush met the EC leaders after attending a NATO summit in Rome which approved a new post-cold-war strategy embracing the Soviet Union and East European countries as partners.

Homeless who sued over body odour wins cash settlement

NEW YORK (R) — A homeless man was awarded \$150,000 Friday to settle his claims that police and a public library discriminated against him because they said he stank.

Officials in the New York suburb of Morristown, New Jersey had already spent up to \$250,000 in legal fees fighting the case. The homeless man, Richard Kreimer, 42, agreed to drop his lawsuit against municipal officials in exchange for the \$150,000. Kreimer said after a court hearing that he would donate some of the money to other homeless people. But he said: "I'm not going to be a bank for every homeless person on the street."

AIDS monkey infection may speed research

SEATTLE (R) — AIDS researchers have said they had for the first time been able to infect Macaque monkeys, ideal experimental subjects, with the virus that causes most cases of AIDS, the Type-1 Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or HIV-1.

If confirmed, the discovery could provide scientists with the best animal model yet for AIDS research. Since the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic more than 10 years ago, scientists have been looking for an animal that could be infected with HIV-1 that could also be easily studied in the laboratory. Chimpanzees will contract HIV-1, but they are too expensive and rare to be used in large numbers. Macaque monkeys, on the other hand, are much easier to breed and keep in laboratories. The research, conducted by University of Washington scientists, was presented to a national AIDS conference in Seattle this week. "This is new. Before there wasn't even transient infection there was no evidence of HIV-1 being able to infect these monkeys," said AIDS expert Flossie Wong-Staal of the University of California, San Diego, a symposium chairwoman. Previously, most researchers have been forced to use two other viruses, related to HIV-1, that will infect Macaques. Unfortunately, these two viruses are quite different from HIV-1, she told Reuters. "If it really pans out that HIV-1 can infect these monkeys, and furthermore that it can induce disease, it will be the model to go after," she said.

Gauguin painting sold for \$9.3 m

PARIS (AP) — Paul Gauguin's painting of a Tahitian woman was sold at auction to an American collector for almost \$9.3 million, an auctioneer said, the highest price fetched in France for a work by Gauguin. Jacques Tajan, head of the auction house, did not disclose the name of the person who purchased The House for \$9.29 million. French museum officials described the 99-year-old painting as high quality, but said they would not invoke a law requiring some masterpieces to remain in French territory. The price for the painting was about nine times higher than the previous record for a Gauguin painting in France. The record for a Gauguin painting was \$22 million in 1989 in New York for Mara Mura. The House was put up for auction by the family of Louis Jone, a former cabinet minister of Charles de Gaulle, and the father of Defence Minister Pierre Jone.

Lukyanov turns jail poet

MOSCOW (R) — Former Soviet Parliament Speaker Anatoly Lukyanov, arrested for his alleged role in last August's coup, is writing poetry in his Moscow cell, a right-wing newspaper reported Thursday. The newspaper Den (The Day) printed six poems by Mr. Lukyanov, a fellow-student and close friend of President Mikhail Gorbachev. He was known as a part-time poet under the pen-name Osenov. His poems, passed to the newspaper by his family, suggest he believes he will eventually be vindicated. One of his verses reads as follows: (Reuter translation) "All night long the rain beats on the grille. Trying to break through. Through the nonsense of the newspapers, the fog and lies. To truth and sympathy. To wash clean a simple word. Trampled in the mud-conscience. To rebuild the living link. Between what was and what is."

U.S. policy faces test as Baker begins Asia trip

THE HAGUE (R) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, preoccupied for most of 1991 with revolutionary changes in Europe and Middle East peace moves, began to turn his attention Saturday to Asia, where U.S. policy is being tested.

Baker was due to begin an eight-day trip to Japan, Korea and China — a visit of heightened significance since President George Bush announced he was postponing a separate trip to the

region for domestic political reasons.

Mr. Baker leaves after joining Mr. Bush at trade talks in the Hague with European Community (EC) officials following the NATO summit in Rome.

China, Japan and South Korea are eager for visits by Mr. Baker, but rapid change in other areas, U.S. policy considerations and personal preferences precluded them until now.

Critics say the Bush adminis-

tration has neglected the economically vital region.

Mr. Bush made a brief swing through all three countries in early 1989 and had planned a more substantive visit to Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Australia later this month until a barrage of criticism that he was ignoring domestic affairs.

He has vowed to reschedule the Japan leg before the 1992 presidential election but for now, Mr. Baker will be the senior U.S.

official to meet new Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa.

Although the United States has major issues to discuss with Japan, the first stop on Mr. Baker's itinerary, and South Korea, his second stop, the centerpiece of the trip is certain to be China.

Baker, on November 15-17, will be the highest-ranking U.S. official to go to Peking since the Chinese army killed hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

Yeltsin's troops land in Caucasus republic

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin sent troops to pacify a rebel southern Russian autonomous republic Saturday, but dissident tribesmen said they had surrounded the force at a military airfield.

General Djokhar Dudayev, leader of the breakaway region on Chechno-Ingushetia, refused to recognise a state of emergency ordered by Mr. Yeltsin Friday. In its place he imposed martial law and called for a general mobilisation.

The region's army minister, Yussup Soslanbekov, told reporters that 800 to 1,000 Russian Interior Ministry troops had landed at a military airfield in the capital Grozny but were surrounded there by Chechen forces.

Mr. Soslanbekov said he had four hours of talks with the troops' commander, demanding that they lay down their arms and fly back. They had not responded, he said.

Sharip Yusupov, Dudayev's representative in Moscow, said an additional 800 crack Russian Interior Ministry troops, known as Spetsnaz, had also been surrounded at their headquarters in Grozny by the region's National Guard.

Soviet news agency (TASS) said thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Grozny and turned it into an "armed fortress" ready to defend the independence of Chechno-Ingushetia.

The small autonomous republic, north of Georgia between the Caspian and the Black Sea, has been part of Russia since its incorporation into the Tsarist empire in 1859. Its people are mostly Sunni Muslims.

Its defiance of Mr. Yeltsin set the stage for all-out confrontation, posing a test of the Russian leader's authority over ethnic minorities which are flaring with the idea of independence.

Gen. Dudayev, elected president of Chechno-Ingushetia last month in polls which Russia refused to recognise, called on the population to defend its freedom. Parliament granted him special powers to tackle the crisis.



Boris Yeltsin

A parliamentary official, Isaac Kodzoyev, told reporters in Grozny: "There is no need for the military to interfere in our internal affairs. We prefer the language of negotiations."

He added: "Our motto is to avoid bloodshed, but if there is bloodshed, anything could happen."

Mr. Kodzoyev said Mr. Yeltsin's actions showed he was willing to champion the rights of Russians but not of ethnic minorities.

"We saw Yeltsin as an icon, but it seems he wants only freedom for the Russians. Today the myth of Russian democracy died," he said.

A Russian Interior Ministry spokesman said he could neither confirm nor deny that troops sent by Mr. Yeltsin were surrounded in Grozny. The Soviet Interior Ministry said it would issue a statement Sunday.

TASS said groups and individuals, many of them carrying weapons, were massing in Grozny in response to Gen. Dudayev's call to arms.

Radio Russia reported: "Barri- cades are being built in Grozny, self-defence detachments are being formed and weapons are being distributed. The People's Militia took an oath of allegiance to the Koran."

Main roads were blocked and rail traffic halted, according to TASS. Gen. Dudayev called on the temporary administrator named by Mr. Yeltsin to run the republic to resign by noon Saturday.

The Jordan Valley Arabian Stud

The Jordan Valley Arabian Stud announces the opening for registration for those who have attended the official opening and those who are interested in joining the club.

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21 die in S. African violence

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Twenty-one black miners were killed overnight in fresh fighting at a violence-plagued South African gold mine, the mine owners said Saturday.

Anglo American said in a statement 44 more workers were injured in the fighting which broke out just before midnight at President Steyn Gold Mine near Welkom in the Orange Free State.

Last Sunday 15 blacks were killed at the mine in fighting linked to a two-day general strike called by unions trying to force the government to give them a say in policy-making.

Leaders of U.N. advance force in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (R) — Leaders of a U.N. force that will try to keep the peace in Cambodia after two decades of war and political turmoil arrived Saturday.

"UNAMIC is on the ground," declared Ataul Karim, a Bangladeshi, who will head civilian operations of the 268-person United Nations Advanced Mission in Cambodia.

"We are here to see that the ceasefire, which is now official, is maintained," Mr. Karim told reporters.

He arrived early Saturday morning with Indonesian Colonel Ferry Tinggogoy, who is interim leader of the soldiers of the multinational force.

UNAMIC will include 50 military officers from 22 nations, a 40-member Australian Communications Group, 20 mine-clearing experts from New Zealand and helicopters with 111 mechanics and crew.

Mr. Karim said the advanced team would also lay the groundwork for building up the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) which will have a larger, long-term force.

Philippine flood death toll reaches 7,000

MANILA (R) — Rescuers Saturday hauled up bloated bodies by fishing nets off a central Philippine island where more than 7,000 people may have died in devastating floods, relief officials said.

Navy boats and fishermen retrieved hundreds of corpses from the sea off Ormoc City in the past 24 hours, bringing the death toll to 5,365 with 2,046 other people missing and presumed dead, officials in the Leyte provincial capital, Tacloban, said.

"They are hauling up bodies by fishing nets," said Aurora Laboy, administrative officer for the Leyte Disaster Coordinating Council.

"There is a possibility the death toll will go up to close to 8,000... the missing are most likely dead by now. We have no more hope for them," Ms. Laboy said by telephone.

President Corason Aquino is to fly to Ormoc, 560 kilometres south east of Manila, Sunday to inspect the damage from the worst natural calamity to hit her disaster-prone country in 15 years.

She has ordered massive rehabilitation work, declaring Leyte a disaster area.

The casualties from floods that ravaged the port of Ormoc and nearby towns exceeded the combined death tolls from three major disasters that struck the country in the past 17 months.

More than 800 villagers died in last June's eruption of Mount Pinatubo volcano, 500 were killed in a typhoon in November last year and 1,650 perished in a 7.5 magnitude earthquake that devastated the northern Philippines in July 1990.

Ms. Laboy, quoting radio reports from rescue workers in Ormoc, said "many more bodies" had been seen floating in Ormoc Bay and navy boats, fishermen and volunteers continued to retrieve them.

people living in Isla Verde village in Ormoc were feared to have drowned in the floods which reached four metres in some places, officials said.

The floods hurled people, houses and cars into the sea. Some of the bodies were swept away by currents to as far as Panay Island, about 100 kilometres from Ormoc.

About 3,500 bodies recovered, have been buried in mass graves, and 500 more are to be buried Saturday, a spokesman for Ormoc Congressman Carmelo Locsin said.

Fearing epidemics, rescue teams hastily dumped bodies of men, women and children together in common graves, hardly bothering to separate them.

In some places, corpses were buried without being identified. Pictures were taken of most of them in case relatives looking for them turned up.

C-130 military transport planes and helicopters airlifted food, clothing and medicines to Ormoc in a round-the-clock operation.

"The situation is very, very

critical," said Governor Emilio Osmena of the nearby island of Cebu, who is helping coordinate relief work.


More supplies were being sent from the U.S. Subic Bay Naval Base, and by ship from Cebu. "We're sending everything from medicine to soap and candles," said Dick Gordon, mayor of the town of Olongapo, next to Subic.

Ormoc officials said there was not enough manpower to distribute the goods.

"We have no food. We can't buy food, because we have no money," said 50-year-old Hon-orata Gatwal as she waited outside the Ormoc mayor's office for four hours to get relief supplies after losing her home in the flash flood.

Japan, Australia, Britain, the United States and France said they were sending help for the victims in cash and kind.

U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner, who visited the area, said the United States would fly in ready-to-eat meals, blankets and materials for building temporary shelters.



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